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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION
WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING
OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES
AND PEOPLES

EAST TIMOR

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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I. GENERAL

1. A detailed account of general conditions and developments relating to the Territory was provided in the 1982 working paper on East Timor (A/AC.109/715).*

II. ACTION TAKEN AT THE UNITED NATIONS

2. It will be recalled that, by resolution 37/30 of 23 November 1982, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to initiate consultations with all parties concerned, with a view to exploring avenues for achieving a comprehensive settlement of the problem and to report thereon to the Assembly at its thirty-eighth session. It requested the Special Committee to keep the situation in the Territory under active consideration and to render all assistance to the Secretary-General, with a view to facilitating the implementation of the resolution. The Assembly also called upon all specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), immediately to assist, within their respective fields of competence, the people of East Timor, in close consultation with Portugal, as the administering Power. On 17 January 1983, the text of resolution 37/30 was transmitted to the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal.

3. In a note to the General Assembly dated 19 August 1983 (A/38/352), the Secretary-General stated that, in view of recent developments regarding the question of East Timor, he did not consider it opportune to submit a substantive report to the Assembly on his efforts to contribute to a comprehensive settlement of the problem at that time. He proposed to submit that report to the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

4. On 2 September 1983, the Special Committee considered the item. It had before it a working paper prepared by the Secretariat containing information on the Territory (A/AC.109/747) and granted hearings to the following petitioners: Miss Margo Picken, Amnesty International; Mr. Charles F. Printz, Human Rights Advocates International; and Mr. José Ramos Horta, Frente Revolucionario de Timor Leste Independente (FRETILIN). The representatives of Indonesia and Portugal made statements. The Special Committee then decided to continue consideration of this question at its next session, subject to any directives the Assembly might give at its thirty-eighth session (see A/AC.109/PV.1241).

5. On 21 September 1983, the General Committee met to consider the draft agenda of the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly. On the proposal of the representative of Norway, the General Committee decided to recommend that the

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* In a note verbale dated 7 October 1982 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/C.4/37/6 and Corr.1), the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations conveyed the comments of his Government concerning the 1982 working paper on East Timor.

Assembly defer consideration of the item on East Timor to the thirty-ninth session (see A/38/250, para. 22). By decision 38/402 of 23 September 1983, the Assembly decided to include in the provisional agenda of the thirty-ninth session the item entitled "Question of East Timor".

6. During the general debate of the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, a number of countries referred to the question in their statements (A/38/PV.6, 14, 17, 20, 26, 27, 29, 30, and 32) and Indonesia and Portugal made statements in exercise of their rights of reply (A/38/PV.33).

7. On 30 March 1984, in reply to a request for information under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations, the Portuguese Government (A/39/136) reiterated that it had nothing to add to the information provided in its note of 6 April 1979 (A/34/311). At that time, it had stated that conditions prevailing in East Timor prevented the Portuguese Government from assuming its responsibilities for the administration of the Territory and it regretted being unable to provide the information requested.

III. MILITARY SITUATION

8. A de facto cessation of hostilities prevailed in the Territory from March to July 1983. On 8 August, however, 16 members of the Indonesian Army Engineering Corps were killed in an incident at Cararas, near Viqueque. Following this incident, various press reports indicated that military operations against FRETILIN were being resumed and that the Indonesian Government was sending additional troops to East Timor. On 16 August, General L. B. Moerdani, Commander-in-Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces, in an interview with Sinar Harapan, was reported as saying that the Army would "use every means at its disposal to wipe out the FRETILIN remnants". Subsequently, it was reported that Colonel Purwanto, the Indonesian armed forces commander in East Timor, had been replaced by Colonel Rudito. 1/

9. On 1 September, Mr. William G. Hayden, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, expressed his Government's concern to the Indonesian Government at reports of a new build-up of Indonesian forces in East Timor. 2/ The following month, on 7 October, the Permanent Representatives of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe to the United Nations transmitted to the President of the Security Council a letter from Mr. José Luis Guterres of FRETILIN, stating that the Indonesian forces had undertaken a major military offensive in East Timor (S/16034).

10. By letter dated 8 November addressed to the Secretary-General, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations categorically denied that "a major military offensive" was under way and rejected FRETILIN's claim that "20,000 troops" were involved. He indicated, however, that a limited security action had taken place in pursuit of the perpetrators of the 8 August "crime". He also stated that the FRETILIN elements had been reduced to an "insignificant number" and that the general amnesty offered by the Indonesian Government since 1977 was still valid (S/16132).

11. At the end of December 1983, the Australian press carried reports of a visit by General Moerdani to East Timor and indicated that he had urged anti-Government guerrillas to stop fighting and join in the efforts to build a just and prosperous society. He had given assurances that those who surrendered would be treated humanely, but had warned that the armed forces were determined to maintain peace and security in the Territory. 3/

12. Between January and March 1984, press reports spoke of continuing military activity. In April 1984, according to diplomatic sources in Jakarta, it was estimated that, since August 1983, about 200 Indonesian soldiers had been killed in clashes with FRETILIN guerrillas, who had suffered a comparable number of losses. The same sources put at 800 the number of FRETILIN fighters who were living mainly in the mountains with their families and apparently suffering from food shortages. 4/ Indonesian officials have maintained that the security situation on the island has greatly improved since the beginning of the year and that the level of military activity has, therefore, been substantially reduced. No independent verification of the military situation has been possible because access to the Territory by outside observers has been largely restricted since August 1983.

13. On 1 June 1984, Australian newspapers reported that, during a visit to Canberra, Mr. José Ramos Horta of FRETILIN had stated that his movement was prepared to have talks with Indonesia, without agenda or precondition. 5/ On the same day, Mr. Mochtar Kusamaatmadja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, reportedly said that the Indonesian authorities were not ready to enter into such talks and that there was no point for FRETILIN to continue its resistance. 6/

14. By note verbale dated 3 July 1984 addressed to the Secretary-General, the Permanent Representative of Sao Tome and Principe to the United Nations transmitted documents relating mainly to the military developments in the Territory, including a statement by Mr. Abilio Araujo of FRETILIN and a letter dated 16 February 1984 from the Apostolic Administrator of East Timor (A/39/345-S/16668).

15. The Australian Ambassador to Jakarta, Mr. Rawdon Dalrymple, visited East Timor from 4 to 7 July 1984. According to a press release issued in Canberra on 8 July, the Governor of East Timor and the military authorities in Dili told the Ambassador that the security situation was under control and that FRETILIN actions had been reduced to occasional "acts of terrorism" carried out by groups of two or three people. The Ambassador asked why such a substantial number of troops was required and it was pointed out that a large proportion was needed for development projects, many of which were in remote areas where civilian contractors were not interested in operating. It was also explained that the troops were required for village security.

IV. HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

16. Although the Indonesian Government has repeatedly denied reports of human rights abuses in East Timor, various allegations of human rights violations continue to be made.

17. An Australian parliamentary delegation, led by Mr. W. L. Morrison, visited Indonesia from 22 July to 4 August 1983, and spent four days in East Timor. In its report, 7/ the delegation stated that some violations of human rights were continuing in East Timor, although to what extent could not be determined. It considered that those violations included the continued presence of detainees without trial on Ataúro Island, the control of movement of persons in and out of East Timor, the impediment of departures from East Timor for purposes of repatriation or family reunion and the censorship of mail.

18. Press reports indicate that, in an apparent retaliatory move, up to 200 East Timorese villagers were killed following the incident of 8 August 1983 (see para. 8). These reports have been denied by Indonesian officials. It has also been reported that an additional number of suspected FRETILIN supporters have been detained as a result of the resumption of Indonesian military operations in September 1983. 8/

19. By letter dated 24 October 1983, the Permanent Representatives of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe to the United Nations transmitted the following documents to the President of the Security Council: a letter from Mr. José Luis Guterres of FRETILIN; excerpts from an interview given by Monsignor Martinho da Costa Lopes, former Apostolic Administrator of East Timor, to a London-based human rights organization; and excerpts of a report on the human rights, social and humanitarian situation in East Timor, prepared and made public by FRETILIN (S/16083). On 9 December 1983, the Permanent Representative of Vanuatu to the United Nations transmitted to the Secretary-General a letter from the President of Vanuatu forwarding a report by Amnesty International on East Timor dated August 1983 (S/16215). These documents charged the Indonesian authorities with widespread human rights violations in East Timor, including torture, "disappearances", summary executions and indiscriminate killings.

20. On 10 December 1983, a bi-partisan group of 105 members of the Congress of the United States of America addressed a letter to President Ronald Reagan expressing its concern over reports of massive violations of human rights and widespread human suffering in East Timor. In a letter addressed to Mr. George Schultz, the United States Secretary of State, in April 1984, a group of 22 senators also referred to reports of systematic abuses of fundamental human rights, including relocation, detention, denial of visitation and atrocities. 9/ Early in July, 123 members of the United States Congress addressed a similar letter to Mr. Schultz prior to his visit to Indonesia. 10/

21. In 1983, the Indonesian authorities announced their intention to close down the "resettlement camp" on Ataúro Island and to allow all displaced persons to return to their homes by the end of the year. After reportedly reaching a peak of some 4,000 in the second half of 1982, the number of imorese detained on Ataúro Island dropped to approximately 2,100 by August 1983. The movement of persons back to the main island was subsequently interrupted and in June 1984, the total number of displaced persons on Ataúro Island remained about the same, according to International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The Indonesian authorities have indicated that they remain committed to closing the facility as soon as possible.

22. In February and November 1982, the Indonesian authorities allowed ICRC to visit detainees in Dili and Los Palos, as well as the displaced persons on Ataúro Island. On the basis of a subsequent understanding, ICRC continued to have regular access to Ataúro Island, where it has been running, with assistance from Indonesian Red Cross, a relief and medical programme in favour of the displaced population. It had also hoped to visit other detention centres in East Timor beginning in June 1983, but the proposed visits were postponed at the request of the Indonesian authorities. Following negotiations, an agreement on the progressive resumption of the ICRC protection activities was reached in December 1983. This agreement provides for a series of visits, scheduled to take place in four stages between March and October 1984, gradually covering the various facilities where those persons arrested because of events in East Timor are being detained. The first stage was implemented in March 1984, when ICRC delegates were accorded access to detainees in Dili and to the displaced persons on Ataúro Island. A second series of visits took place in June, when ICRC delegates were able to return to the detention centre in Dili and to Ataúro Island and were also allowed to meet with East Timorese detainees in Jakarta and Kupang (West Timor).

23. The implementation of the family reunion and repatriation programme undertaken by ICRC with the co-operation of the Indonesian Red Cross has been accelerated. As a result, during 1983, 134 persons were repatriated to Portugal and 105 were reunited with their families in Australia. Between January and June 1984, 108 other persons left East Timor for Portugal and 24 departed for Australia. In 1982, the total number of persons allowed to leave East Timor for repatriation or family reunion purposes to the two countries was 50.

24. An article in The Times (London) of 24 February 1984, date-lined Jakarta, said that the Indonesian Government had begun trying members of FRETILIN in civil courts on subversion charges and that, since December 1983, a total of 12 men had been sentenced to from six to eight years of imprisonment. Another 12 suspected FRETILIN members were reported to be awaiting trial in Dili. Indonesian sources later confirmed that alleged perpetrators of "security disturbances" in East Timor had been brought for trial before the Dili District Court of Justice. The same sources indicated that, between December 1983 and the end of March 1984, 23 persons had been tried and sectenced to prison terms ranging from 6 to 17 years, with the exception of one defendant who had received a two-month sentence. The names of these persons have reportedly been communicated to Amnesty International. It was also pointed out that the trials had been conducted in public, although foreign observers had not been allowed to attend them, and that another 200 detainees had been scheduled to be prosecuted, in accordance with Indonesian civil and criminal law.

25. In February 1984, the Working Group established by Commission on Human Rights decision 1983/110 "to examine situations referred to the Commission by the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities under Economic and Social Council resolution 1503 (XLVIII) and those situations of which the Commission is seized", considered, inter alia, the human rights situation in East Timor and adopted a recommendation which was submitted to the Commission at its fortieth session. Subsequently, in a statement made on 6 March 1984, the Chairman of the Commission indicated that the Commission had taken action in closed

session on a number of countries, including Indonesia (in relation to East Timor). 11/

26. At the beginning of July 1984, Pope John Paul II, receiving the credentials of the new Indonesian Ambassador to the Vatican, expressed his concern for the situation in East Timor. In this context, he reportedly recalled that the Holy See "earnestly recommended" respect for human rights and expressed the hope that particular consideration would be given in every circumstance to the ethnic, religious and cultural identity of the people of the Territory. 12/

V. FOOD SITUATION

27. The Australian parliamentary delegation which visited Indonesia in July-August 1983 (see para. 17) noted, in its report, that East Timor had traditionally been a region of precarious food supplies and nutritional deficiencies, with only 40 per cent of the entire area of the Territory being considered suitable for agriculture. In the past, the majority of the population had been engaged in shifting ("slash and burn") subsistence farming, using very primitive techniques. Moreover, poor quality soil and a lack of continuous water supplies in most areas were major constraints in agricultural activity. The delegation also pointed out that the events of 1975/76 had seriously disrupted East Timor's fragile agricultural pattern and that a famine had occurred in parts of the Territory in 1978/79, resulting in widespread malnutrition and an unknown number of deaths.

28. The Australian parliamentary delegation considered that at the time of its visit to East Timor, the food situation was generally satisfactory. It had neither heard nor seen evidence to the contrary and food storage around huts had been evident in all the villages that it visited. The delegation expressed the view that a combination of climatic factors and administrative problems, as well as the absence of a developed cash economy, could still result in periodic food shortages in isolated villages. It noted, however, that active efforts were being made to increase East Timor's food production, especially by extending irrigation systems and the introduction of new crops. It also noted that current efforts to improve the road system would, in time, enable a more efficient and rapid distribution of food.

29. According to official Indonesian sources, a number of programmes and projects were carried out between 1976/77 and 1982/83, including the extension of the agricultural area, the rehabilitation of the existing agricultural infrastructure and the rehabilitation and development of irrigation systems. Agriculture extension services have also been provided to farmers, as well as tools, improved seeds and pesticides. As a result, there has reportedly been a steady increase in food crop production and the authorities have estimated that East Timor should achieve self-sufficiency within the next five years.

30. Table 1 below presents Indonesian statistics on the evolution of rice and corn production during the period 1970-1982:

Table 1

East Timor: rice and corn production, 1970-1982
(metric tons)

Crop	1970	1974	1979	1982
Rice	18 307	6 473	15 921	29 845
Corn	16 941	5 127	31 360	68 200

Sources: For 1970 and 1974, "East Timor Provincial Government", The Development of the Province of East Timor (in Indonesian), as reproduced in the Australian Financial Review, 25 January 1983; and for 1979 and 1982, Department of Home Affairs, Development of the Province of Timor Timur (Jakarta, May 1984).

31. During 1983/84, the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) continued to implement the five-year agricultural development programme in the Laso River Basin near Sare, south-west of Dili. The programme, which is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) at a total cost of $US 5 million, currently involves 1,950 farmer families and is intended to encourage settled farming, multi-cropping and increased food crop production through improved cultivation and irrigation methods.

32. A few recent press reports have suggested that the resumption of military activity following the incident of 8 August 1983 (see para. 8), has had a disruptive effect on food production and that the food situation in some parts of the Territory has become critical. Indonesian officials, however, stress that the 1984 harvest is good and that the provincial authorities in Dili have been maintaining adequate food stocks for distribution to food-deficient areas.

VI. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS

33. According to official sources, the Indonesian Government is committed to bringing East Timor to a level of economic and social development comparable to the other provinces in the country. In order to achieve that objective, the per capita allocation for the development of East Timor is reportedly higher than that of the other provinces. The development funds received by East Timor between 1976/77 and 1983/84 amounted to Rp 204.4 billion, 13/ comprising presidential instruction funds for village, district and provincial projects, health, primary schools and roads, Rp 76.6 billion; funds for sectoral projects, Rp 83.3 billion; and the routine budget for government administration, Rp 44.4 billion.

34. The major development potential of East Timor is considered to be agriculture, in which almost 90 per cent of the population is involved. Apart from measures to increase food production, efforts have been made to expand the agricultural area and to rehabilitate and promote plantation crops, particularly coffee production, which dropped severely following the events of 1975/76. The authorities are planning to develop clove, coconut and sugar cane plantations on a larger scale.

Measures are also being taken to increase the number of livestock and to develop fisheries and a freshwater fishing industry. The main industrial activities have so far focused on the processing of agricultural products and the promotion of the local handicrafts industry.

35. East Timor suffers from a serious lack of transport and communication facilities and some areas are only accessible by helicopter. Improvement of the basic infrastructure of the Territory is therefore considered a priority, and special attention is accorded to road construction. According to official Indonesian sources, 2,957 kilometres of road and 18 bridges have been built since 1976/77 and the fourth development plan (1984-1989), provides for the construction of some 4,000 kilometres of subsidiary roads during the next five years. The same sources indicated that the airport at Dili will be expanded to accommodate larger aircraft and that the construction of another airport at Baucau is under way. 14/

36. Malaria, tuberculosis and skin diseases reportedly remain serious problems in East Timor despite significant efforts to provide better health services. In August 1983, the Australian parliamentary delegation also noted that some degree of malnutrition was evident in some of the places it visited, although it did not appear to be widespread. Since 1976/77, the Indonesian Government has taken various steps to overcome these problems through the rehabilitation of existing facilities, the construction of a new hospital and a nursing school at Dili, the establishment of 34 community health centres and the recruitment of paramedical and medical staff. Two hospitals under construction in Maliana and Baucau are scheduled for completion in 1984. Nutrition and sanitation programmes are being carried out with the support of 13 mobile health clinics and the Indonesian Red Cross. To improve sanitary conditions at the village level, the authorities are also installing water pumps and constructing wells and small reservoirs to collect rain water.

37. As reported previously, following an agreement reached in May 1982, UNICEF has been co-operating with the Indonesian Red Cross in the implementation of a special project focusing on the strengthening of nutrition and health care activities in favour of the most vulnerable groups (mothers and children). The project was carried out in seven sub-districts until June 1984 at a total cost of about $US1 million. It was expected that it would be extended into the next year to meet continuing needs for nutritional surveillance and health education, as well as supplementary feeding of malnourished children. Between January and April 1984, UNICEF, in collaboration with local health personnel, undertook a mass immunization campaign which covered the seven sub-districts of the project, reaching almost 100 per cent of all eligible children under five years of age. Literacy classes and gardening activities to increase protein availability have also been undertaken under the programme.

38. In co-operation with the Indonesian Red Cross, ICRC carried out a food and medical assistance programme from October 1979 to the end of 1982. ICRC had intended to continue the programme in 1983, but it was not granted access to all the places where assistance requirements would have to be evaluated. It therefore decided in July 1983 to suspend its participation in the relief assistance activities on the main island of East Timor. However, its programme on Ataúro Island has continued without interruption.

39. Indonesian statistics indicate that the illiteracy rate was estimated to be over 78 per cent in 1980. However, sustained efforts have been made in recent years to provide educational facilities to the people of the Territory. Old schools have been rehabilitated and a large number of new ones have been built. Teachers have been brought into the Territory from various provinces of Indonesia, but the lack of skilled personnel continues to pose major difficulties. Table 2 below illustrates the progress in school construction and describes the evolution of the school population at the different levels. Some 200 East Timorese students have also been granted scholarships to pursue undergraduate studies outside the Territory.

Table 2

East Timor: number of schools and students, 1977-1984

	1977	1980/81	1981/82	1982/83	1983/84
			Schools		
Elementary	107	203	229	376	400
Junior high	9	19	23	28	34
Senior high	-	3	4	5	7
			Students		
Elementary	23 041	68 709	77 658	90 437	99 430
Junior high	926	2 474	3 810	5 622	7 940
Senior high	-	286	572	1 047	1 707

Source: Planning Bureau, Department of Education and Culture, "East Timor Province", as reproduced in East Timor After Integration (Department of Foreign Affairs, Jakarta, March 1984).

Notes

1/ Agence France Presse, Jakarta, 16 August 1983 and 20 September 1983.

2/ Melbourne Overseas Service, 1 September 1983.

3/ The Age (Melbourne), 29 December 1983; and the Canberra Times, 29 December 1983.

4/ Agence France Presse, Jakarta, 11 April 1984; and Le Monde, 14 April 1984.

5/ The Age (Melbourne), 1 June 1984.

Notes (continued)

6/ Agence France Presse, Jakarta, 1 June 1984.

7/ Official Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to Indonesia, July-August 1983, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1983.

8/ Agence France Presse, Jakarta, 20 September 1983; The Washington Post, 23 September 1983; and Sydney Morning Herald, 8 October 1983.

9/ The New York Times, 8 April 1984.

10/ Ibid., 12 July 1984.

11/ Press Release HR/2549, 8 March 1984.

12/ The New York Times, 8 July 1984; and Indonesia Times, 9 July 1984.

13/ $US 1.00 equalled Rp 425 until November 1978; Rp 625 from November 1978 to March 1983; and Rp 970 until the end of June 1984.

14/ East Timor After Integration (Department of Foreign Affairs, Jakarta, March 1984).